

**Remarks for Ministry of Finance
2018 Pre-Budget Consultations
February 1, 2018
Time Limit: 3 minutes**

Durham Banquet Hall & Conference Centre
559 Bloor Street West, Oshawa, Ontario

Good morning Minister Sousa and Mr. Dickson. My name is Rozalyn Werner-Arcé, Executive Director of Therapeutic Recreation Ontario. On behalf of our 1600 members, I thank you for the opportunity to give input to Ontario's budget and what more the government can do to create jobs and grow the economy.

Therapeutic recreation (TR), when delivered by qualified practitioners, enables individuals to achieve quality of life and optimal well-being through authentic and meaningful participation in recreation and leisure across a variety of settings such as long-term care and retirement homes, mental health programs, rehabilitations centres, hospitals, disability programs.

An esteemed employer list includes: Sienna Senior Living, Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre, CAMH, Ontario Shores, ErinoakKids Centre, and Alzheimer Societies, just to name a few.

Today I will focus my comments on TR and Long-Term Care. TR is an often underutilized resource in Long-Term Care. It is often perceived as a

frill, but there is plenty of evidence to demonstrate that recreation and leisure are necessary to a person's quality of life.

In Long-Term Care, TR can mean the difference between living versus existing. Of course, personal care provided with dignity and respect must be a priority, but once people are fed and dressed, what do they do with the rest of their day? Residents need to have meaningful programs and experiences to fill their day. Research demonstrates that TR contributes to improvement in functional capacity, decreased responsive behaviours, loneliness, boredom and depression, and increased life satisfaction, self-worth and quality of life. Furthermore, TR provides non-pharmacological interventions that have positive results without negative side effects.

TR is at its optimal when interventions are developed on an individualized basis. It gets to the root cause of people's anxiety, agitation or aggression and works with the rest of the care team to implement interventions. However, the reality is that most TR practitioners are often responsible for caseloads of up to 150 residents. Therefore, Recreation Therapists use their skills to adapt their programming to meet the countless preferences of the residents through a wide variety of meaningful group programs.

So how does all of this contribute to Ontario's economy and create jobs? The Ontario government has started already by providing additional funding to BSO and 15 million hours of nursing, personal support and therapeutic care annually.

These are good steps to addressing some of the issues in LTC and will hopefully create new jobs.

Unfortunately, recreation and leisure funding is folded into the nursing envelope and when budgets are running low, recreation is the first to go.

This impacts not only the staff through layoffs and lost jobs but impacts the residents too.

Therefore, Therapeutic Recreation Ontario calls for:

- The establishment of a life enrichment protected envelope of funding that would support TR in LTC settings
- An increase of Therapeutic Recreation (TR) programs delivered by qualified practitioners
- An increase in the ratio of TR practitioners to residents in Long-Term Care homes
- And the establishment of hiring standards including consistent education requirements, job titles and adequate compensation.

Thank you.